

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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CITY PAIR PROGRAM FISCAL YEAR 2023
PRE-SOLICITATION CONFERENCE

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THURSDAY
JANUARY 20, 2022

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The Pre-Solicitation Conference met
via Video Teleconference, at 1:30 p.m. EST, Mary
Gartland, Director, presiding.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

MARY GARTLAND, Director, City Pair Program

ANDREA ANDERSON

JEWELL ANDERSON

JEROME BRISTOW

JENNIFER BURDETTE

COREY GERST

EBONY WHITE

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LEANNE DAVIDSON
MEGHAN LUDTKE
PAOLA MARTINEZ
NATHANIEL ROSENBLUM
PATRICK SANDERS

ALASKA AIRLINES:

PATTY EWBANK
SYLVIA KANG
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DERRICK SURRATT

DELTA AIR LINES:

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MITCHELL FRIEDMAN
JOHN LOTT
RENEE WALTON-SMITH
BARBARA WOBROCK

EMIRATES:

ANDREA SMAGACZ

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JUSTIN SCHIFFNER
CHRIS SCHLATTER

UNITED AIRLINES:
AARON ADAMS
MIKE BEAUCHAMP
PETE LUCS
MARK REYNA

OTHER INDUSTRY ATTENDEES PRESENT:

EDUCOLOGY SOLUTIONS:
ROBERT BOAKAI

SAP CONCUR:
BARBARA ABOID
BETH JOZWIAK
CAROLEIGH KARLSSON
STEVEN POTTER

TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY / GOLDSRING CONSULTING:
NEIL HAMMOND
JULIE SIMPSON

AGENCIES PRESENT:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE:
CECELIA KIZER

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE:
JULIE HENDRIX
KEVIN SASIELA
NILS STINSON
ANDREW LEE WALKER

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY:

STEVEN SMITH

TERRY WILLIS

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, SCIENCE &
TECHNOLOGY:

LISA WEIMERN

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR:

VIJAYA RAMPHAL LANE

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE:

MICHAEL HORKAN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

PATRICIA MCCANN

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FEDERAL AVIATION
ADMINISTRATION:

CANDICE GALESKI

DEFENSE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE:

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RINDA SMITH

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LISA MUNNS

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION:

L CANDACE LOCKHART

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION:

SANDRA DUNCAN

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:33 p.m.

MS. GARTLAND: Okay. Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the City Pair Program FY23 pre-solicitation conference. I am Mary Gartland. I am the director of the City Pair Program. I want to thank everyone for joining us today. It's been an exciting year and we're really looking forward to our next year's solicitation and we hope you are too.

So, here's the agenda, just very general. We will walk through all these today. Obviously you can ask questions throughout. But at the end we'll also have some more time to answer any questions that we may have not gotten to or come to mind at the end.

City Pair Program overview. So again I want to thank you guys for being here today. You are our most important stakeholders. We wouldn't have this program without you. So we just wanted to point out our partnership values and how we manage our relationship with our

1 suppliers.

2 We really believe in award resilience.
3 Obviously each year we are meeting here, we meet
4 with you all one on one or ad hoc-ly to make sure
5 that we're updating our solicitation requirements
6 to meet our agency's needs, but also to remain
7 flexible with whatever is happening in the
8 industry today. We know that COVID has given us
9 a lot of twists and turns, and we're trying to
10 remain as flexible as possible to make sure that
11 our procurement is still meeting the needs of our
12 agencies, but also meeting your schedule
13 adjustments or otherwise due to this pandemic.

14 We also optimize our procurement and
15 data strategy. Each year we're reviewing how can
16 we better this procurement, how can we better our
17 data. What more can we do to ensure that our
18 program is meeting the mark for our customer
19 agencies and for our suppliers.

20 And we also maintain our contract
21 without interruption during COVID. As I
22 mentioned we know there's a lot of schedule

1 adjustments, we know there's a lot of travel
2 restrictions, and we still try to maintain as
3 many city pairs as possible during this time.
4 Even though we know there might be some gaps we
5 try to make those ends meet so everyone is able
6 to get where they need to go and fly on our
7 contract carriers when possible.

8 Transparency. We've always liked to
9 be very up-front and transparent with our
10 program. We continue to improve information and
11 data-sharing. We share quarterly market share
12 reports and we continue to get feedback on that
13 and update as relevant. We're a best-in-class
14 procurement vehicle. So we always have to share
15 a lot of data with our government agencies as
16 well.

17 And of course we always look to
18 continue to award on time so we can get early
19 access to those contract fares for the next
20 fiscal year of travel.

21 Collaboration. As mentioned we always
22 like to meet and exchange ideas. We have one on

1 ones. We'll meet ad hoc-ly. We have partnership
2 meetings. We want to ensure that we are meeting
3 everyone's needs in this program as a government-
4 wide mandatory program. We want to incorporate
5 the voice of our customers and our industry
6 partners.

7 We continue to try to collaborate in
8 ways that will support and strengthen our
9 relationships with both of our stakeholders,
10 customers and suppliers.

11 So I hope that you take into
12 consideration these partnership values that we
13 have and hope that you feel the same. And we're
14 bringing value to this partnership and program.
15 I think I will turn it over to our program
16 manager Ebony White. Thank you.

17 MS. WHITE: Thanks, Mary. So moving
18 forward we're going to talk about our program
19 management improvements. So for FY23 we have
20 three program changes or improvements that we are
21 looking to implement. And if you've already
22 taken a glance at the FY23 RFP you would have

1 seen this information briefed throughout that
2 documentation.

3 So the first one is our Premium
4 Economy Fare _CP. The next one is maximum
5 connection time extensions which we've talked
6 through industry and the agencies about impact
7 based on COVID to service schedules. And so
8 we're taking action to make some improvements
9 there as well. And then the third one is
10 increase markets solicited. We'll discuss these
11 a little bit more in detail in an upcoming slide.

12 So looking at our Premium Economy
13 Fare, as I said we have been working on this for
14 a few years now, making sure that we've heard the
15 voice of industry as well as our agencies and our
16 travelers, identifying that there is a bona fide
17 need for this premium economy fare. And so our
18 goal at City Pair Program is to bring a new class
19 of service to the program overall. We know that
20 this is something available commercially and of
21 course our contract is commercial products so we
22 want to bring those services and tools to the

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1 government travelers in an efficient and cost-
2 saving way.

3 So our program improvement is to
4 incorporate a small subset of markets,
5 international markets. So we're going to do a
6 total of nine. These are test markets where
7 we've done some analysis where we see that this
8 is both being used currently outside of the
9 program and where there's some improvement that
10 can be placed upon the travelers for us to get
11 the data and analyze how we can potentially grow
12 this market share.

13 We have also teamed with our audit
14 department to ensure that this is not going to be
15 audited because it is not in the first class or
16 premium class service that is currently being
17 required for reporting. And then we've also been
18 working with policy to identify how this can be
19 incorporated into the FTR. There should be me an
20 FTR bulletin that will be released within the
21 next year that will incorporate again your voice.
22 So you'll have another opportunity to identify if

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1 there's a need for you and provide some
2 additional information to policies before they
3 move forward with their steps.

4 We will provide the market at a later
5 date, but they will be also identified again in
6 the RFP.

7 Here are premium economy markets just
8 to give you a quick view of those. In the
9 attachment to the RFP they are broken out again
10 by Group, Groups 1, 2 and 3. So the line item
11 numbers will correspond based on the grouping
12 that they belong to. We wanted to give you just
13 a quick snapshot so you can see where we're
14 focusing for FY23.

15 Extended minimum connection time. We
16 identified earlier on last year that service has
17 changed and been consistent based on COVID
18 impact, especially in a lot of international
19 markets and some of our domestic markets.

20 So to combat the impact of losing
21 markets out of the program we did some analysis
22 and determined that we could make an improvement

1 by extending the maximum connection time. It
2 does not mean that all City Pair connection times
3 will change or increase by 30 minutes. But to
4 maintain that competition and market coverage we
5 saw that there was an opportunity for us to grow
6 in identifying this 30-minute window that would
7 allow us to maintain some of the markets that we
8 did lose based on service connection time in some
9 domestic and international markets.

10 So of course we took an approach where
11 we're going to look at all markets, domestic and
12 international. We increase the connection time
13 by 30 minutes, and then we will continue to
14 monitor this as hopefully we recover from COVID
15 over the next year. If we decide that this is no
16 longer necessary then we will be there reverting
17 it back to the original timeline which is the 120
18 minutes for domestic and then 180 minutes for
19 international.

20 Increase markets solicited. Every
21 year we seek information from our agencies to
22 identify as their missions change from year over

1 year if there are markets that we are currently
2 not soliciting that we need to incorporate in the
3 upcoming procurement.

4 So this year we were able to do some
5 analysis and determine there were an additional
6 568 markets that we could add to our
7 solicitation, bringing that number to 14,630
8 markets. That is the largest amount of markets
9 that we've solicited to date through the City
10 Pair Program. That increase of 4 percent is an
11 estimated \$1.057 billion for the total value of
12 the City Pair Program for FY23. So we are
13 listening to our agencies and we're consistently
14 adding markets as we see fit. We also will
15 remove markets if the need shifts as well.

16 I will turn this over to our
17 contracting officer and contract specialist.

18 MR. GERST: That's me. Good
19 afternoon. Welcome, everybody. I want to start
20 off by as I always like to do is thanking our
21 industry partners that are on the line today for
22 your continued participation. It's important to

1 the City Pair Program. I know Mary thanks you as
2 well.

3 In the beginning, this program doesn't
4 work, we don't have a City Pair Program without
5 you guys. You're going to hear me use the word
6 "partner" and "partnership" a lot today because
7 that's how we all view this. It is a
8 partnership. Together we succeed. We try to do
9 everything we can to be good partners to you guys
10 and ask that you do the same.

11 I also know that there's a lot of our
12 government partners on the line so I want to
13 thank them as well for listening, for your
14 continued interest in this and most importantly
15 the trust that you have in us, in me from the
16 procurement standpoint and Mary and Ebony, from
17 the program management standpoint for just having
18 faith that we're going to get it right and do our
19 best to give you the services that you desire and
20 the flights that you desire.

21 COVID has been just a nightmare for
22 everybody. Unfortunately we've seen a good

1 amount of turnover from our industry partners,
2 and I know a lot of you are playing catch-up. So
3 I felt like since we didn't have too, too many
4 updates in this year's requirement I was going to
5 spend some time today reviewing the solicitation
6 documents.

7 Federal procurements are just unique
8 and vastly different than how the private sector
9 conducts purchases. We know that -- not to give
10 you my resume, but I did work in the private
11 sector for nine years prior to coming to the
12 government so I've seen both sides and been on
13 both sides of the table so I get it.

14 We adhere to a robust and regimented
15 process as outlined in the Federal Acquisition
16 Regulations or the FAR which is over 800 pages
17 long. So for any of you that are overwhelmed,
18 again, I get it. If it makes you feel any better
19 I'm supposed to be a subject matter expert on all
20 800 plus pages. Lucky me. So again, I like to
21 joke that my job is secure because nobody else
22 wants it.

1 Anyway, because our process is so
2 different I wanted to take again some time today
3 to familiarize you with our RFP. Just so we're
4 clear you may hear the words Request for Proposal
5 from me, or RFP, or you may hear me say the word
6 "solicitation." They're interchangeable. They
7 mean the same thing. Just know that RFP and
8 solicitation are again one and the same.

9 The solicitation document itself is
10 lengthy. It's approximately 122 pages of
11 awesomeness. It includes eight attachments as
12 well. So it's a lot. You know, I get it. But
13 in order to participate in this requirement it is
14 incumbent on all of you that are interested in
15 submitting it -- to familiarize yourself the best
16 you can with all the documents that we give you.
17 So you know there is a method to the madness with
18 that.

19 We released the draft RFP in mid-
20 January. We did it last week. We give you guys
21 a month almost to the day till we release the
22 final RFP which typically happens in mid-

1 February. And then we give you another month to
2 submit your proposals and offers in mid-March.
3 So from start to sort of finish there's about two
4 months in there for you guys to review and
5 familiarize yourself with what the requirement
6 is.

7 I ask that you guys take advantage of
8 that time, especially the newer folks so you can
9 grasp the requirement detail, familiarize
10 yourselves with the terms and conditions, and ask
11 any questions that may arise during the
12 appropriate phases.

13 All right, so let's talk about the
14 RFP. There's a lot to unpack. My goal today is
15 not to bore you to tears and to jazz this bad boy
16 up a little bit.

17 So we're going to start with Section
18 A of the RFP. Section A is simple. It's the
19 standard form 1449. There's certain blocks
20 therein that you guys will need to complete. I
21 believe it's block 17A which is your company
22 information. And then I believe it's block 30A

1 and 30B and 30C which is your name, your title,
2 and your signature. Review all that information
3 and make sure that it's included with your
4 proposals that you submit to us on March 17.

5 Section B. Section B describes the
6 services we're procuring as well as provides the
7 government's definition for a host of words and
8 terms that you're going to see throughout the
9 solicitation. We do this so there's a clear
10 understanding of what the government means when
11 we use these words, that it's not confused with
12 any other interpretations that you may have. Our
13 requirements, our words. If you have any
14 questions about any of our definitions, again,
15 please take advantage of the question and answer
16 phase so that we can try to help you better
17 understand, or answer any ambiguities or any
18 uncertainty you guys might have with these
19 definitions or terms.

20 Section C. This is the longest and
21 one of the most important parts of our
22 solicitation because it contains a description of

1 what we're looking to purchase. Here you will
2 find the scope of our requirements, a list of the
3 mandatory and non-mandatory users for the City
4 Pair contract as well as our technical
5 requirements. Please take your time reviewing
6 this section of the solicitation because it
7 explains the minimum service standards, provides
8 information on electronic ticketing information
9 regarding -- it provides information on the
10 dissemination of contract fares, and clearly
11 spells out all of the technical requirements you
12 will need to comply with to be considered for
13 award, and that you will need to maintain to hold
14 onto that line item award throughout the
15 procurement.

16 Section D and E are blank and not
17 applicable. That's why they're not included.
18 Section F covers the period of performance for
19 our requirement. It outlines the confirmation of
20 services process as well as the government's
21 process if and when a carrier no longer meets our
22 minimum flight requirements or has a temporary

1 reduction of service. So there are some
2 processes in place that some of you may not be
3 familiar with, and there are some options that
4 you guys have when there might be a temporary
5 reduction in service that would allow you to
6 retain or earn back a line item if you have a
7 temporary reduction. So please just look that
8 over and familiarize yourself with it.

9 This section also addresses how our
10 auto cancellation process works. Section G
11 discusses contract administration and focuses on
12 the ordering of services and the audits that will
13 be conducted throughout the period of performance
14 and after.

15 And my favorite part, how we handle
16 post award price reductions. So if you ever
17 reduce your fares on an awarded market that will
18 give you instructions on how to reach out to me
19 and let us know so that we can save some taxpayer
20 dollars which I like to do.

21 Section H is our special contract
22 requirements. This is a huge factor that

1 everybody needs to look at. You need to make
2 sure you're complying with all the provisions of
3 the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 as amended, as
4 well as relevant rules, regulations, and policies
5 issued by the Department of Transportation and
6 the Transportation Security Administration as
7 well as the Department of Defense, and TRANSCOM,
8 and CRAF, all that good stuff you can find in
9 Section H. So please review Section H because
10 that is very, very important.

11 Section I. Very boring, but it's
12 there. It lists all the contract clauses, the
13 terms and conditions you have to adhere to when
14 you're doing business with the federal
15 government. So look that over.

16 Section J I think is something kind of
17 cool that we give you. It's basically a
18 checklist or cheat sheet. We spell out
19 everything you need to include in your proposal
20 submission to be considered for award. Just as
21 an FYI when we receive your proposal submission
22 this is the first thing that Andrea and I will

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1 look at. We go down the list item by item to
2 ensure you included everything when you submit
3 your proposals to us on March 17. I definitely
4 recommend taking full advantage of the content in
5 Section J and use it as you're compiling your
6 proposal to be submitted to us because we spell
7 it out pretty clearly there for you guys.

8 I'm going fast. Does anyone have any
9 questions? Because I'm just going to keep
10 rocking and rolling here if you don't. Okay,
11 cool.

12 The next section is Section K. We use
13 that for our representation, certifications, and
14 other statements of offerors. This is where
15 you're going to identify your authorized
16 negotiators, who your primary and alternative
17 points of contact are, and who your customer
18 service point of contact is. The customer
19 service point of contact is who our government
20 partners are going to be using if they have any
21 questions.

22 The primary and alternative points of

1 contact is going to be the people that Andrea and
2 I contact for any solicitation or contractual
3 matters that may come up. The person needs to be
4 knowledgeable about your City Pair contract and
5 acceptable to us. There are a host of other
6 certifications and representations, like your
7 CRAF certification, your codeshare partner
8 arrangements, your compliance with air quality,
9 safety, must completes in this section as well.
10 So please make sure you review it. This also
11 involves your SAM registration which I'll speak
12 to a little bit later. But there's a lot of good
13 stuff in Section K so just please make sure you
14 look at it and provide good information there.

15 The next section is Section L which is
16 our offer submission instructions. Pretty self-
17 explanatory so I'm not going to spend too much
18 time on this. It gives you the deadlines as well
19 as our solicitation provisions and other
20 pertinent information regarding the required
21 content for your offers.

22 Section M. This is one of the more

1 unique things that the government does. We
2 provide you with our evaluation methodology. For
3 those of you that work predominantly with private
4 industry we're basically giving you a roadmap on
5 how your submission will be reviewed and what it
6 will take to win a line item award. So we're
7 telling you what needs to be done to win the
8 award. I don't know that any other customers of
9 yours does this. It discusses our evaluation
10 methodology, our Group 1 scoring, our composite
11 calculation, and how we handle and prioritize our
12 best value trade-off determinations.

13 I want to remind everybody that we're
14 soliciting 14,630 markets and not one carrier is
15 going to win all 14,630 of them. So I am a
16 former sales manager myself. I get the
17 disappointment that some of you may feel when you
18 lose a market that you thought you'd win, but I
19 assure you that every line item you win there is
20 another carrier that's equally upset that they
21 lost. So I like to joke with you all that at the
22 end of the day if I've upset all of you equally

1 then I know I've done my job. I get the
2 frustration. I get that in your mind you think
3 we won this, this is a lock. But there are
4 instances that we spell out in this section that
5 we adhere like it's the Bible very strictly to
6 when we conduct our evaluations. I think those
7 of you that know me well enough know that we are
8 fair and we are very strict in our interpretation
9 of the methodology we listed in Section M. And I
10 make sure that our evaluation team and myself do
11 not deviate from that. So everybody is signing
12 off the same sheet of music when it comes to
13 that.

14 We're wrapping up here. So after
15 Section M comes our two addendums which are
16 additional terms and offers you must agree to in
17 order to be considered for award. They're brief.
18 Each one is about half a page.

19 So in addition to that fun stuff we
20 have Attachments 2 through 8 that are all updated
21 to SAM. Attachment 2 is our COPS user manual
22 which provides instructions on how to submit your

1 line item fares into the COPS offer submission
2 tool. Please look at that before reaching out to
3 Ebony, Andrea or myself with any COPS questions
4 because the manual is updated annually and it's
5 pretty helpful. I'd like to think that 99
6 percent of the questions you might have can be
7 answered just using that manual so take advantage
8 of it.

9 Attachment 3 is a sample
10 subcontracting plan. This is a template, and I
11 want to repeat that it's a template. It was
12 created by the GSA Small Business Office. For
13 those of you that don't know what a small
14 business subcontracting plan is I'm going to give
15 you the Cliffs Notes version of it.

16 Large prime contractors are expected
17 to complete subcontracting plans. Small business
18 subcontracting plan is when you receive an award
19 that's expected to exceed \$750,000 and has
20 subcontracting possibilities. So this is a huge
21 check of the box here for City Pair.

22 These plans are required for the

1 acquisition of commercial items. If you don't
2 want to use our template you can review FAR
3 19.704 which lists what is required in these
4 plans. Subcontracting plans or sub-K plans
5 include goals for subcontracting efforts to
6 provide fair opportunities to compete for
7 subcontracts for various types of small business
8 concerns including veteran-owned small
9 businesses, service disabled veteran-owned small
10 businesses, HUB zone small businesses, small
11 disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small
12 businesses, et cetera, et cetera. As a reminder
13 failure to make a good faith effort to comply
14 with the plan can result in liquidated damages
15 cost which is 52.219-16.

16 Moving on, Attachments 4 through 6 are
17 just our Groups 1, 2, and 3 line items. We give
18 you the flight origin, destination, as well as
19 the government's estimated passenger count. This
20 is a requirements contract so I want to remind
21 you all that the passenger counts we provide are
22 estimates. That goes in line with what we're

1 required to do in a requirements contract is only
2 give you estimates. Nothing is guaranteed.
3 There's no minimum or maximum contract values.
4 Everything is estimates.

5 Attachment 7 is a template we're
6 asking you all to use to submit your draft RFP
7 questions which is due to us by tomorrow, January
8 21. If you miss tomorrow, you don't get things
9 in on time rest assured you'll have another
10 opportunity when we release our final RFP to ask
11 questions. So you'll have two chances, two bites
12 at the apple.

13 And finally we have Attachment 8.
14 Attachment 8 is our significant changes document.
15 It's kind of the highlight reel I guess of the
16 updates we've made year on year to the
17 requirements. To be honest I'm not a fan of this
18 document. It makes me nervous just because
19 significant is a subjective word. As a
20 contracting officer I need to remind you all to
21 review the RFP in its entirety because Attachment
22 8 is not all-inclusive. So we've tried to make

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1 it easier for you. I know this is a fan
2 favorite, this document, so we provide it year on
3 year, but please in addition to looking that over
4 also look through everything else so that you
5 catch all the updates that we made.

6 I'm about to go to the next slide but
7 I want to give you guys an opportunity to ask
8 some questions because I know I talk fast. I
9 don't think I've done this before in these
10 meetings so I felt like it was a good thing to
11 start to give you a basic understanding of what
12 the RFP and the Attachments are for.

13 So here's some updates and reminders.
14 On December 7 there was a nationwide injunction
15 for contractor -- for the contractor vaccination
16 requirement. So this came up during our industry
17 one on one meeting. I tip my hat to our industry
18 partners because a lot of you knew before I did
19 that President Biden was going to issue an
20 executive order for the COVID vaccination
21 mandate.

22 A couple of you reached out to me

1 before it was actually done and I was kind of
2 scratching my head like huh. And then sure
3 enough I think a day or two afterwards it
4 happened. So you'll notice for anyone that's
5 looked at the draft RFP, hopefully that's all of
6 you, that that FAR clause is not included. So we
7 are complying with the injunction. I will
8 certainly update the final RFP if anything
9 changes between now and then, the injunction is
10 lifted or something. But right now we are in
11 full compliance with the injunction. You'll see
12 that that vaccine mandate FAR language is not
13 included in the draft solicitation. Any
14 questions on that one?

15 This next one is really, really
16 important. It's becoming more of a thing.
17 Everyone needs to monitor routinely your SAM
18 registration. Simply put, I can't do business, I
19 as contracting officer cannot award a contract,
20 or even issue a contract modification or do
21 anything really if the offeror or the awardee did
22 not have an active SAM registration.

1 Everybody needs to stay on top of
2 that. You need to make it a priority to give
3 yourself some lead time to go through the renewal
4 because it has to be a priority for everybody,
5 and we cannot be in a situation where any of the
6 awardees or contract holders have an expired SAM.

7 The other thing I want to bring to
8 your attention because it's come up a few times,
9 there are vendors out there that offer services
10 to sort of help you set up or renew a SAM
11 account. SAM registration is free. I want to
12 say that again. SAM registration is free. If
13 you receive an email from anyone about your SAM
14 account, or where they're offering to help you
15 renew or update your SAM account it's more than
16 likely a third party trying to solicit you. So
17 just be mindful of that. I'd recommend looking
18 at who the sender is and doing a Google search of
19 who they are so you can see if it's a private
20 industry or anything.

21 Again, we're partners. We value the
22 partnership. Andrea sends out reminder emails to

1 everybody letting you know when your SAM is about
2 to expire. We're not obligated to do that. We
3 do that as a courtesy. Again, we want to live up
4 to our end of this partnership. So please just
5 take advantage, that's all I ask. Stay on top of
6 it. It's a really big deal if your SAM
7 registration expires to the point where we may
8 have to terminate a contract because we're not
9 allowed to do business with you if you're
10 expired. Any questions on that?

11 MR. ADAMS: Hey Corey, it's Aaron
12 Adams from United Airlines. How's it going?

13 MR. GERST: Good, how are you?

14 MR. ADAMS: Pretty good. So, last
15 year there were some issues with updating the SAM
16 when it comes to -- like there were I guess some
17 requirements that GSA put into SAM that needed to
18 be updated. Would you guys give us an update if
19 there are any clauses or anything that's added
20 that we need to update to verify our SAM?
21 Because we don't know on our end if there's
22 something the government has that we need to go

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1 in and certify to.

2 MR. GERST: Great point, great
3 example. Thank you. Aaron, to the best of our
4 ability we certainly will try to help out with
5 that. I think a good example of that was the
6 section 889 thing where initially when it first
7 rolled out you guys had to as part of your
8 submission to us check a box on that FAR clause.
9 Section 889 is now part of FAR 52.212-3 -- God,
10 I'm a nerd -- and you have to put that into SAM.
11 That's now part of your SAM renewal. So when you
12 look at that, that would be a good example of
13 something that used to be something that was
14 included to us but now is funneled through SAM
15 and through your annual registration, re-
16 registration, certification. So, Aaron, again
17 emphasizing that "partner" word, yes, we will do
18 our very best when there are things that are new
19 to SAM. I'm sorry, yes, that are new to SAM and
20 by extension the FAR that we require you guys, or
21 that need to be updated in SAM. We will try our
22 best to stay on top of it and let you guys know

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1 about it.

2 Also, when you go to the SAM website
3 they do have notifications on there. In some
4 instances when something crazy comes up they do
5 give extensions as well on SAM renewal. So they
6 try to be flexible as well. But I would just
7 advise you guys to monitor your SAM accounts as
8 often as you can.

9 The FAR is a living document meaning
10 that when there's new legislation, when there's
11 executive orders it's routinely updated. So it's
12 a challenge for everybody to stay on top of all
13 the updates because they happen with pretty good
14 frequency. Any other questions? Aaron, thanks
15 again for that question.

16 MR. ADAMS: No problem.

17 MR. GERST: Anyone else? The last
18 bullet on here is just review your COPS
19 submissions. I know -- I'm learning I should say
20 your process and your offer submission process.
21 And I'm learning that even though we keep COPS
22 open for a month a lot of the offerors don't

1 necessarily take advantage of that time because
2 of your own internal approval processes. Again,
3 I'm learning. It's all a journey.

4 So, what we do ask is to leave
5 yourself some time. Make sure you're getting
6 enough time to meet our deadlines. Make sure
7 you're giving yourself enough time to address any
8 errors that may come up in COPS. Make sure
9 you're giving yourself enough time to review your
10 submission to make sure there's no typo errors or
11 submission errors on your end because we do our
12 best during our discussion phase if we catch
13 something to bring it to your attention,
14 something that we think might be in error. But
15 it really is incumbent upon everybody that you
16 look at your submission and try to catch things
17 and take your time and not rush through them
18 because as we all know if we wait till the last
19 minute that inevitably is when mistakes happen.
20 So just to the best of your ability take
21 advantage of the time we allocate for you to
22 avoid any unnecessary issues.

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1 Draft solicitation questions are due
2 tomorrow at 3 p.m. Eastern time. Please send
3 them to me, corey.gerst@gsa.gov and copy Andrea,
4 andrea.anderson@gsa.gov and onthego@gsa.gov and
5 use the Attachment 7 template.

6 As I mentioned before you will have
7 another opportunity to submit questions when you
8 release our final RFP. We're going to try to
9 release our responses on Friday, January 28.
10 It's going to be posted to sam.gov. Please make
11 sure you monitor that website. I'll try to send
12 the courtesy link out to everybody once those
13 responses are posted. It may be earlier, it may
14 be later depending on how many questions we get.
15 There really isn't that many changes from last
16 year's. We're hoping there won't be too many
17 questions or anything coming.

18 I believe that's the last one for me
19 and I am going to hand it off to the wonderful
20 Andrea Anderson.

21 MS. ANDERSON: Thanks. Hi, everyone.
22 This is Andrea Anderson. I am the contract

1 specialist for the City Pair Program. Today I'll
2 be going over COPS. So for those of you that are
3 new to COPS, COPS is a web-based application. It
4 allows the carriers to submit their offers
5 electronically through a secure website.

6 We will be opening up COPS for testing
7 on January 31 through February 11. This is a
8 time where the COPS users can go in and test the
9 system. They can upload their offers. They can
10 validate if the offers went through, see if you
11 get any error messages. So we recommend that you
12 go in and test the system, and if you guys have
13 any feedback or questions for us just please let
14 us know.

15 Also, I should say that as Corey
16 mentioned the draft RFP posted last week. And
17 when he posted that he also added the Attachment
18 2, which is the COPS Manual. So I would
19 recommend that the COPS users become familiar
20 with this document because it will walk you
21 through the process of adding an offer, deleting
22 and modifying an offer. So we highly recommend

1 that you become familiar with this document.

2 Also, we will be having two training
3 sessions during the testing period, and I'll go
4 over that in the next slide.

5 For your Group 1 offers we will be
6 opening up COPS on February 17 through March 17.
7 For Group 2 we will open COPS on March 23 and
8 close on April 13. For your Group 3 offers we
9 will open COPS on April 18 and close on April 22.
10 Your points of contact for COPS will be Ebony and
11 I. So if you guys have any questions just please
12 let us know.

13 Also, as Corey was mentioning please
14 try and upload your offers the sooner the better.
15 You definitely want to give yourself enough time
16 to fix any error messages you may get. And if
17 you can't figure out how to fix that problem you
18 want to make sure you give us enough time to
19 figure it out too. So we highly recommend that
20 you submit your offers early on.

21 Also, last week I sent out an email to
22 the carriers asking for the COPS user names. So

1 that's essentially the person that's going to be
2 uploading the offers to COPS for your companies.
3 So if you haven't submitted those names to me yet
4 please do so by tomorrow by 3 p.m. Does anybody
5 have any questions?

6 So we will be having two training
7 sessions. The first one will be on February 3 at
8 11 a.m. The COPS team, the COPS experts will be
9 going over the manual. They will also be
10 conducting a live demo. And the training session
11 on February 9 will be held at 1 p.m. It's a Q&A
12 session. So if you have anything you want to ask
13 the COPS experts this is the time to do so. They
14 will be there. They'll be able to assist you
15 with anything.

16 An invitation will go out next week to
17 all the COPS users for these two training
18 sessions. But anybody that's interested in
19 participating in these training sessions can. So
20 if you'd like to attend just send me or Ebony an
21 email and we'll gladly add you to these training
22 sessions.

1 We just want to make sure that the
2 carriers have the tools necessary to upload their
3 offers successfully. So that's why we're
4 offering these training sessions. That's why we
5 open COPS for testing. So please take advantage
6 of all of these opportunities. Does anybody have
7 any questions?

8 So here are the upcoming RFP dates.
9 The final Request for Proposal will be released
10 in mid-February. Group 1 offers are due March
11 17, Group 2 offers are due April 13, and your
12 Group 3 offers are due April 22.

13 The special board will meet for their
14 initial review in early to mid-April. The final
15 proposal revisions are due mid to late May. And
16 if the special board needs to meet for the final
17 review they will do so in early June. And we are
18 planning on awarding the FY23 CPP contract in
19 mid-July. So this is our timeline. Does anybody
20 have any questions? I'll hand it over -- back to
21 the program office.

22 MS. WOBROCK: Hey Andrea, I have a

1 quick question. It's Barbara with Delta. The
2 actual contract is due, is that March 17? The
3 signed contract.

4 MR. GERST: Proposals. Yes.

5 MS. WOBROCK: Proposals? Okay.
6 Thanks.

7 MS. WHITE: Thank you both, Andrea,
8 Corey and Barbara. I'll hold if you have a
9 follow-up question, otherwise I'm going to
10 proceed. We're going to cover some significant
11 changes, and we'll do a review by section just to
12 give you some more clarity as to what has changed
13 from last year's procurement to this year.

14 So the solicitation changes will fall
15 into session B.2 under definition, B.3 technical
16 requirements and M.5.

17 All right, so for B.2 definitions of
18 course I spoke to this earlier. We're including
19 the premium economy fare so of course we have to
20 identify in the definitions what that contract
21 fare is. So I'm not going to read the definition
22 verbatim there for you. But it is a contractor's

1 fare. It's going to be for select international
2 markets with a premium economy class of service.
3 It is not coach. It is in premium economy class
4 of service. We do understand that the carriers
5 have different variations of this class and they
6 definitely call it something different. So right
7 now we want to make sure that we have specific
8 enough details so you have an understanding of
9 what we're soliciting for but it still meets your
10 commercial requirements.

11 There will be an auto cancellation
12 policy for this fare class. No difference in the
13 business class. So that will kind of give you
14 your marker for the ticketed requirements, seven
15 calendar days prior to departure. So that does
16 differ from the YCA. So again we want to give
17 you this definition and this is added in the RFP.

18 Definition for regional jets. This is
19 just an update. Last year we contacted the FAA
20 and got some instructions on how the definition
21 has shifted over the years. We socialized this
22 with the airlines and wanted to provide an

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1 update. So we are classifying for our contract
2 specifically the airlines will provide regional
3 jet support when the aircraft has 89 or less
4 seats. So again, we've had conversations
5 regarding aircraft that typically has somewhere
6 in the 70 range. It still meets that
7 requirement. We did not broaden this to impose
8 any difficulties on the airlines, but we did want
9 to make sure that it was updated as again
10 guidance from FAA shows that that information has
11 been changing over the years.

12 This is also referred to as the
13 commuter jet, and again this still aligns with
14 the maximum seat capacity of 89 seats.

15 So the next one we're looking at is
16 C.3 technical requirements. So again we briefly
17 discussed connection time. So this just gives
18 you exactly the information from the technical
19 requirement section, identifying that for
20 domestic flights connection times will not exceed
21 the 150 minutes so we add 30 minutes to the
22 original timeline of 120.

1 And this is also our connection times
2 when it comes to international routes. The not
3 to exceed was changed from 180 to 210. So the
4 definition itself and the requirements have not
5 changed other than that maximum not to exceed
6 connection time where we added 30 minutes.

7 So for offer evaluations for Group 1
8 of course we've incorporated the _CP guidance
9 information. This is to give an expansion on
10 language that did not previously include premium
11 economy. So we added within the international
12 line items excluding the international business
13 class and premium economy or business class fares
14 that are not a part of the evaluation.

15 We discussed in the RFP as you will
16 review the premium economy class of services are
17 not incorporated into the composite fare. Once
18 the YCA fare is awarded for a particular market
19 if that class is one of the select nine markets
20 where a _CP fare is available for offering then
21 we will consider the _CP after the fact. So
22 again this is not included in the composite fare.

1 Any questions on that before we move to the next
2 section?

3 MR. GERST: Ebony, I just want to
4 clarify for the _CP markets, the nine markets,
5 those are the only markets we're going to be
6 accepting _CP fares for. It kind of sort of came
7 up in the past, what if we wanted to do _CP for
8 another one. That would be considered an
9 unsolicited offer which we're not considering, at
10 least not for this year. Maybe going forward
11 depending on how things go with this FY23
12 procurement we may expand.

13 MS. WHITE: Thank you, Corey. So now
14 we're going to get into some market selection and
15 market information.

16 All right, so here is a breakout of
17 the markets. This information not in numeric
18 form but in content is included in the
19 Attachments 4, 5 and 6 of the RFP. Group 1 is
20 broken out, 1,465 markets, Group 2 is 11,439, and
21 Group 3 is 1,726. There are breakouts for
22 domestic and international.

1 Some of the biggest changes I'll cover
2 in a couple of the other slides, but we saw a
3 movement in markets and passenger count
4 obviously. It was just part of our criteria. We
5 also saw service changes where flights that were
6 typically direct or nonstop services that did not
7 require the extended connect grouping are now
8 extended connect. Some business class markets
9 dropped business class so in our analysis that is
10 part of the component that we consider, what has
11 shifted in the commercial market based on what we
12 historically would solicit. And we've adjusted
13 accordingly.

14 Here's our market dynamic. So you can
15 see the growth or reduction in any particular
16 grouping. Again we did increase our market
17 selection by 4 percent. Group 1 will see a 31.2
18 percent drop. That's a main adjustment for
19 requirements. We do look at the service levels
20 and the need of our travelers. So some of the
21 Group 1 markets have moved to Group 2 because
22 historically we've seen consistency between

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1 service and pricing and so we moved those to a
2 price only evaluation. We also saw some
3 passenger count changes that required movement
4 between Groups 2 and 3 as well.

5 For Group 2 we saw an increase, 11.1
6 percent. Some of that accounts for markets that
7 were new to the program this year and they fell
8 into the Group 2 bucket. And then same with
9 Group 3. Some of that is accounting for the
10 movement between Groups 1 and 2, and some growth
11 in new markets that we are introducing into our
12 procurement.

13 Domestic grew 3.2 percent and
14 international, we did see some reduction. Most
15 of that is due to COVID or restrictions on air
16 travel to certain locations, certain regions.
17 Any questions?

18 And the last slide in this particular
19 grouping is our FY23 item numbering. Again, this
20 is the current numbering based on the draft RFP.
21 I always want to advise and caution, take
22 advantage of the information in the draft RFP,

1 but we do have the right to adjust the market
2 numbering if needed when -- or prior to
3 submission of the final RFP. So you'll want to
4 make sure that you review the final RFP when you
5 do your preparing of your offers. So we have our
6 numbering set up.

7 We have taken heed of comments from
8 prior years so that when we add or remove a
9 market from a particular grouping it doesn't
10 completely shift all the other groupings. So
11 we've created spacing between the markets to be
12 able to add or remove a market without impacting
13 the rest of the markets. So you will see some
14 gapping in the numbering and that was
15 intentional. And so these are your numberings
16 for each of the groups.

17 MR. GERST: I'm giving you a virtual
18 hug for mentioning that. The draft RFP is called
19 a draft RFP for a reason, and it's the final RFP
20 that everybody really needs to be the most
21 familiarized with. Things are subject to change
22 between the draft and the final. But thank you

1 for bringing that up.

2 MS. WHITE: No problem. We're going
3 to just go over some contact information. Again,
4 the premise behind our conversation starting off
5 with Mary is to identify our partnership. And we
6 definitely support and appreciate the time and
7 effort and energy that everyone puts into our
8 program from industry to our agency partners. So
9 we want to make sure we provide our communication
10 information if you have contract-related issues,
11 onthego@gsa.gov, and program-related issues,
12 travel.programs@gsa.gov. And then we also have a
13 contact number for you. Please feel free to
14 contact those two components.

15 When it comes to any questions that
16 are specific to FY23 again there is an Attachment
17 7 for you to submit your formal questions so that
18 we can provide a response that can be published
19 on sam.gov. But in your normal everyday kind of
20 movement if you have questions about the program
21 or contract you can send those questions via
22 email or contact the telephone number.

1 This next slide is our individual
2 point of contact information. So of course we
3 have contracting, Corey and Andrea. Their email
4 and contact numbers are there available for you.
5 I'm going to leave this up for a second as I talk
6 through it so feel free to jot down any
7 information you need.

8 From the program office we have Mary
9 Gartland, Jerry Bristow, myself, Jennifer
10 Burdette, and Jewell Anderson. Our email and
11 phone numbers are there as well. Whenever in
12 doubt you always can reach out to myself, Corey
13 and Andrea directly. And then if it needs to be
14 elevated to Mary or anyone else on the team we
15 will definitely share that information for you.
16 I'm going to leave this up for a couple of more
17 seconds and then we'll transition to the next
18 slide.

19 The last slide is questions. We want
20 to open this up. Again, full forum. We have a
21 chat box if you want to just chat a question or
22 comment. You can also come off of mute. The

1 transcripts from today's conference again will be
2 published on our GSA website. Give us about two
3 to three weeks and that will be published. I
4 will send out an email reminder to all of our
5 registered attendees when that link has been
6 published and made available so that you can go
7 out and retrieve it without having to check every
8 couple of days to do so. I'm going to stop
9 talking and I'll open it up for questions.

10 MR. ADAMS: Aaron Adams, United,
11 again. Question on the COVID vaccinate mandate.
12 So, there's a GSA website out there that had
13 guidance that said that contractors are expected
14 to see FAR 52.223-99 in the new solicitation and
15 contracts. But -- so we didn't see the clause
16 and I guess we were expecting the clause because
17 from the website it just says that the
18 preliminary injunction issued, it basically halts
19 the enforcement of the clause. So we still
20 should see it in the solicitation of the
21 contracts.

22 MR. GERST: So the guidance I was

1 given and was reiterated by my counsel was to
2 remove that FAR clause from the City Pair
3 solicitation until the injunction is lifted, or
4 until there's some kind of -- I'm pretty
5 confident this will work its way up to the
6 Supreme Court. Not to get too in the weeds, I
7 know the Supreme Court just ruled on another
8 thing to do with the vaccinations. So right now
9 I am just following the guidance that I've been
10 given which was pull the FAR clause from the
11 solicitation which was what we did.

12 MR. ADAMS: Okay.

13 MR. SANDERS: Hey everybody. Patrick
14 Sanders from American Airlines. I was hoping you
15 might be able to talk about a change that didn't
16 make it on the Attachment 8, but I think it bears
17 some discussion. And that's a change to the
18 international line item, offerings for
19 codeshares. I did notice there was a change in
20 the FY23 draft.

21 MR. GERST: I'll have to look.
22 Patrick, I hope it was a welcome change. We

1 realized -- and we did our due diligence, so
2 everybody knows on this matter. We looked at
3 what was being provided. We noticed historically
4 that there's been some confusion over what
5 information as far as codeshares you guys needed
6 to provide to us, whether you were codesharing
7 across the board with one partner, or if you
8 wanted to specify on a line item by line item
9 basis how you were going to give us that
10 information. And to be candid I wanted to do
11 more of a deep dive of what we actually do with
12 that information once you all provide it to us.

13 So, to take a step back from all that
14 we want to embrace that this is a commercial
15 contract. We want to embrace that while we have
16 certain requirements that are unique to the
17 government we don't want to pigeonhole or limit
18 our industry partners when it comes to
19 codeshares, meaning that if you're working with
20 one specific codeshare in a market and you
21 identified it in that section and that specific
22 line item to that specific codeshare partner and

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1 something changes, for contractual purposes if
2 you no longer work with that codeshare partner
3 you're dead in the water. We have to remove that
4 line item from your contract and look to re-award
5 it to somebody else.

6 We, the program office and procurement
7 wanted to give our industry partners the
8 flexibility to make business decisions
9 yourselves. Meaning that we need to know who
10 your codeshare partners are so that we can make
11 sure that they're compliant with DoD, FAA, and
12 everybody's safety standards. So we definitely
13 still need that information.

14 But do we really need to know on a
15 line item by line item basis which codeshare
16 you're working on for which line item? I think
17 we all agree that that was not really information
18 that we needed, and we wanted to give you guys
19 the flexibility to decide on your own who you
20 want to use and when you use them. As long as
21 they're approved and get the preapprovals that we
22 always go through then we want to give you the

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1 flexibility to mix and match and decide on your
2 own, and not have to kind of cut you off at the
3 knees if God forbid something happens to one of
4 your codeshare partners. Does that make sense?

5 MR. SANDERS: It does. Thank you very
6 much, Corey.

7 MR. GERST: You're welcome. It was
8 confusing. I know that some carriers even last
9 year had some questions and submitted things
10 incorrectly to us. So we kind of had to take
11 more of a deep dive into what we're asking for
12 and why, which ultimately led us to say hey, we
13 don't really need this additional information,
14 and let's give our partners the flexibility to
15 mix and match as long as again, you still need to
16 identify pre-award, at proposal submission the
17 codeshares that you're working with so we can vet
18 them.

19 MS. WHITE: Any other questions?

20 MR. GERST: We're trying to jazz this
21 thing up as much as we can. Reading an RFP is
22 like an Ambien. It's probably even better than

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1 Ambien. It'll put you right out. We do our
2 best.

3 MR. ADAMS: All right, well I guess
4 since there's no more questions I guess I'll
5 shoot another question. So, back in the fall we
6 gave you guys some RFI information on
7 sustainability. We didn't see anything in the
8 solicitation regarding sustainability. Is that
9 something we can expect to see in the coming
10 years? Is there any information you can give us
11 on why there wasn't any in this solicitation?

12 MS. GARTLAND: Hi, this is Mary. I
13 can take this. The answers that we got from the
14 sustainability RFI were preliminary. We
15 anticipate doing another RFI based on what was
16 provided and just how far along the industry has
17 come in these few months to see where we are at
18 that time and see how we can incorporate it a
19 little better.

20 It's kind of hard to put something in
21 the solicitation right now, or even on federal
22 procurement when it isn't consistent across

1 carriers. And that's kind of what we're looking
2 for. But I think some are ahead of others in
3 what they are doing. But I think as number one,
4 the administration office is settled in more now
5 for their sustainability initiatives.

6 And then too we're seeing more and
7 more information about sustainability that the
8 industry is doing. And then once we get that
9 second RFI out we're hoping we can see where we
10 can incorporate it. Maybe next year, or at least
11 the coming years. We know that the
12 sustainability, reaching the goal is 2030. So
13 it's kind of a long-range plan. So we're seeing
14 what we can do in the short term and if it makes
15 sense put it into procurement.

16 MR. GERST: If it makes sense and how
17 as well.

18 MS. GARTLAND: Yes.

19 MR. GERST: But thank you so much to
20 everybody that submitted information to us. That
21 was a huge win and I know Mary and her team were
22 tasked by some pretty important people to try to

1 get some feedback from you guys. You guys have
2 always been amazing and that was a huge, huge win
3 for us. So thank you very much for that.

4 Aaron, you got anything else for me?

5 MS. WOBROCK: I've got one question
6 for you, Corey. Barbara with Delta. Section
7 D.4, number 7 and it's regarding premium economy.
8 And I'm looking at the year over year changes
9 document. But you have with the exception of
10 international business class items offers may
11 include a premium class fare. So that's just
12 referring to the nine specific markets that you
13 gave us?

14 MR. GERST: Correct. We're only
15 accepting premium economy offers for the nine
16 markets that we've identified for FY23.

17 MS. WOBROCK: Okay. And then some of
18 these markets are business class markets also, so
19 we'd be offering a business premium economy and
20 then the _CA fares?

21 MR. GERST: YCA fares are mandatory.
22 However, _CA, Premium Economy and Business Class

1 are not.

2 MS. WOBROCK: Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. GERST: That was another big win
4 for us. I know that we wanted to make sure we
5 were in line with commercial offerings so I'm
6 really -- I know Mary and her team are very
7 excited as well that we were able to introduce
8 premium economy this year hoping it will be
9 successful and that you all will submit offers
10 for us. So fingers crossed.

11 MS. WHITE: We just had someone query
12 the nine markets. So we want to make sure that
13 those are up on the screen. Feel free to jot
14 those down. We'll leave those up for a moment.

15 MR. GERST: And just to reiterate,
16 those line items, the premium economy fares,
17 we're going to be doing a fair and reasonable
18 determination for each of them. If we decide
19 that the offered fare is not fair and reasonable
20 we may elect to not award that fare.

21 MS. WHITE: Last round for questions
22 in this forum. Again, you still have the

1 opportunity to submit a question via attachment.
2 Send them by tomorrow. Otherwise we will prepare
3 to conclude the pre-solicitation conference for
4 FY23 City Pair procurement. And we hope everyone
5 has a safe rest of the day. And if you need
6 anything from us independent from this specific
7 procurement you have our contact information.
8 Please give us a call, send us an email. We'll
9 respond accordingly.

10 We greatly appreciate your time and
11 your support and participation in the City Pair
12 Program. And we hope for continued success.

13 MR. GERST: Thank you all.

14 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
15 went off the record at 2:39 p.m.)
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In the matter of: City Pair Program FY 2023

Before: GSA

Date: 01-20-22

Place: teleconference

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Court Reporter

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